

# Nurturing Relationships:

Updates from the JHU/NHGRI Genetic Counseling Training Program

*Welcome to the spring edition of the Johns Hopkins University/National Human Genome Research Institute Genetic Counseling Training Program Newsletter. This newsletter is intended for individuals affiliated with the program, including faculty, clinical supervisors, alumni, support staff, Executive Committee members and current and prospective students. We hope it will keep you up-to-date about our program.*

## Program Updates

William Klein, Ph.D.



We are fortunate to welcome **William Klein, Ph.D.**, as the newest member of the Executive Committee.

After serving on the graduate faculty of the University of Pittsburgh's Department of Psychology for seven years, Dr. Klein joined the National Cancer Institute's Behavioral Research Program as the Associate Director in 2009. Dr. Klein's research interests fall largely under the areas of self-judgment, risk perception, and risk communication. We welcome Dr. Klein's contributions to the committee.

Max Muenke, Ph.D.



Students in the GCTP enrolled in a new course in the fall of 2010, Medical Genetics and Genomic Medicine: From Diagnosis to Treatment. The 13-week course was developed and coordinated

by **Max Muenke, Ph.D.**, Chief and Senior Investigator in the Medical Genetics Branch at NHGRI. It features medical genetics experts from around the world addressing advances in genetics and medical practice. The course was designed specifically to address the needs of students in the GCTP and the NHGRI Genetics Fellows.

Debra J.H. Mathews, Ph.D., M.A.



We're pleased to announce that GCTP students will enroll in a new course developed by **Debra J.H. Mathews, Ph.D., M.A.** with her colleagues at JHU, Gail Geller, Sc.D.,

M.H.S. and **Lori Erby, Ph.D., Sc.M. ('00)**, Ethical, Legal and Social Issues in Genetics and Genomics Over Time.

This course is offered every other year and examines the ethical, legal and social implications of human genetics through the lens of significant and defining periods and events in the history of the field.



Lori Erby, Ph.D., Sc.M.

Congratulations to **Lori (Hamby) Erby, Ph.D., Sc.M. ('00)**, alumna and Executive Committee member, on her tenure track appointment as Assistant Professor in

the Department of Health, Behavior and Society at Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health! Dr. Erby's research interests are focused on the process of genetic counseling and client outcomes, particularly on communication to enhance informed decision-making and adaptation.

## Class of 2011

On January 21, 2011 in the Cloisters Building at NIH we celebrated the graduation of Christy Haakonsen, Sarah Kalia, Neha Kumar, Jane Lee and Kendra Schaa from the GCTP. It was, as always, a bittersweet ceremony. It is sad to say goodbye to daily interactions with these lovely young women. However, we are pleased to have five new colleagues in the field! The students began a full day of celebration by presenting their thesis research in a symposium that faculty, friends and family attended. Titles were:

### Assessing the Feasibility of Coping Effectiveness Training for Caregivers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders



GCTP Class of 2011 (left to right): Neha Kumar, Christy Haakonsen, Kendra Schaa, Sarah Kalia, Jane Lee.

Christy Haakonsen, Sc.M. Advisor: Barbara Biesecker, M.S., Ph.D.

**The Role of Social Comparisons in Coping and Quality of Life Following a Prostate Cancer Diagnosis** Sarah Kalia, Sc.M. Advisor: Debra Roter, Dr.P.H., M.P.H.

**Managing the Need to Tell: Strategic Disclosure of Thalassemia Major in Singapore** Neha Kumar, Sc.M. Advisor: Rajiv N. Rimal, Ph.D.

**The Impact of Children's Risk Status for Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy on Families: An Exploratory Study** Jane Lee, Sc.M. Advisor: Barbara Biesecker, M.S., Ph.D..

**Genetic Counselors' Implicit Racial Attitudes and Their Relationship with Communication** Kendra Schaa, Sc.M. Advisor: Lori Erby, Ph.D., Sc.M.

## Where Are They Now?

**Christy Haakonsen** accepted a position as an information specialist at the Genetic and Rare Diseases (GARD) Information Center in Rockville, Maryland. Christy works with the GARD project team to respond to inquiries about genetic and rare diseases from patients and their families, health care providers, and the general public. She currently resides in Baltimore and hopes to start volunteering for Big Brothers, Big Sisters in the near future!

**Sarah Kalia** moved to Boston to begin her job at the Center for Human Genetics at Boston University, where she is involved in pediatric and adult genetic counseling, as well as coordination of DNA Diagnostics.

In her free time, she has been enjoying exploring Boston!

**Neha Kumar** is excited to enter the world of healthcare consulting. She accepted a position at C1 Consulting, a marketing and market research consulting firm working primarily with pharmaceutical and biotechnology clients and has relocated to New Jersey.

**Jane Lee** finished the thesis research component of her training and is looking forward



NIH Director, Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., made a surprise visit to the Cloisters on January 21, 2011, to play his guitar, Rosalind, and serenade the 2011 graduates. (Left to right) Francis Collins, Jane Lee, Sarah Kalia, Neha Kumar, Kendra Schaa, Christy Haakonsen.

to contributing to the nation's GDP in the near future. She is looking for exciting opportunities along the coasts or other large bodies of water.

**Kendra Schaa** enjoys mentoring high school students through her involvement in the Incentive Mentoring Program while she looks for permanent employment in the area. She is working with Lori Erby and Debra Roter analyzing Genetic Counseling Video Project data as well as preparing her thesis for publication. Kendra has skied in New York and is catching up with family and friends!

## Save The Date!

- Deadline for abstracts to the National Society of Genetic Counselors' (NSGC) 30th Annual Education Conference is May 16, 2011.
- Genetic Alliance 25th Anniversary Annual Conference is June 23 – 26, 2011, in Bethesda, MD.
- Last day to schedule the American Board of Genetic Counseling (ABGC) 2011 board certification exam is July 1, 2011.
- ABGC 2011 board certification examination will be offered August 15 – September 17, 2011.
- GCTP fall classes start August 25, 2011.

• National Coalition for Health Professional Education in Genetics (NCHPEG) 14th Annual Meeting is September 26 – 27, 2011, in Bethesda, MD.

• American Society of Human Genetics Annual Meeting is October 11 – 15, 2011 in Montreal, Canada.

• NSGC Annual Education Conference is October 27 – 30, 2011, in San Diego, CA.

• January 20, 2012 is the next GCTP NIH graduation symposium and celebration. Please plan to attend!

## Faculty News



Barbara Biesecker, Ph.D.

Next time you see Barb, be sure to congratulate Dr. Biesecker! She recently earned her Ph.D. in Health Psychology at the King's College London.

## Alumnae News

Three of our alumnae were recognized as Master Genetic Counselors by their peers and awarded recognition by the Jane Engelberg Memorial Fellowship: **Krista Redlinger-Grosse ('01)**, **Julie Chevalier Sapp ('05)** and **Colleen (Brown) Caleshu ('07)**. Krista was selected to be videotaped for the development of Master Counselor teaching materials. Congrats to all!

Tim and **Elizabeth (Lardy) Repass ('03)** welcomed Charlotte Barbara Repass into the family on January 25, 2011. Congratulations!



**Marie (Cudoc) Belgrave ('05)**, her husband, and big brother, Colin, welcomed Cora Aileen Belgrave



Colin and Cora Belgrave

on February 14, 2011. Marie describes her as the perfect Valentine's Day gift and, from the picture, it looks like Colin agrees!

David and **Rachel (Jacobsen) Silver ('07)** and their daughter, Charlotte Paige, announce the arrival of Max Joseph Silver on February 18, 2011. Charlotte turned two years old in April, so we imagine they're busy!

All alumnae of the class of 2009, **Melanie Baxter, Julie Cohen, Gillian Hooker, Mindy Simonson and Megan Truitt**, passed the 2010 ABGC Board Examination. Congratulations to these alumnae for their accomplishment!



Amanda Singleton

**Amanda Singleton ('10)** accepted a position at GeneDx in November 2010, where she enjoys working with 10 other genetic counselors and numerous other genetic professionals.



Morgan Butrick

Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center welcomed **Morgan Butrick ('10)** this winter as a part-time genetic counselor.

Morgan continues to work with Debra Roter and **Lori Erby ('00)** part-time as well.



Amy Turriff

We are pleased to announce that **Amy Turriff ('10)** was inducted into the Delta Omega honors society at JHU.

We invite you to continue sharing your personal and professional news with us so that we can update the JHU/NHGRI GCTP community. Anne can be reached at [Anne.Madeo@nih.gov](mailto:Anne.Madeo@nih.gov) and Barb can be reached at [barbarab@mail.nih.gov](mailto:barbarab@mail.nih.gov).